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In discussing the approaching death of Stalin [REDACTED] today stated that his sources would tend to indicate that the most plausible successor to Stalin's power would be Georgi M. Malenkov. [REDACTED] seems to feel that Malenkov is the most likely to succeed to the position of power within the Soviet Union for the following reasons: since Malenkov has been General Secretary of the Central Committee he has been in a position to have control over the various parts of the Party Organization throughout the Soviet Union and just recently after the 19th Party Congress in October 1952 when the Central Committee was expanded by an additional 15 members, 11 of these members came from the Apparatchiki, that is to say they were members of the Party Organization over which Malenkov had the most immediate supervisory control. It would appear that Malenkov's recommendation of these additional members to the Central Committee was made with the approval of Stalin which may indicate that previous to the announcement of Stalin's illness Stalin had earmarked Malenkov to succeed him. Further indication of Malenkov's solidifying his power position is the appointment of S. D. Ignatiev in the new Presidium who previously was Security Secretary of the White Russian Party and is reputed [REDACTED] to now be in the Ministry of State Security replacing a Mr. Obakumov who [REDACTED] now feels has been deposed. Ignatiev was nominated by the MGB Club in Moscow.

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On the deposing of Obakumov, [REDACTED] states that he had noticed in the newspaper Pravda that Obakumov's name was missing from the list of people who signed their names to an obituary for a fellow member of the Ministry of State Security and that it has been the practice before this time to have Obakumov sign obituary for any of the members of the Ministry of State Security. If

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this report is true it would indicate that by placing Ignatiev in the Ministry of State Security that Malenkov may have a foothold in the Security Agencies now headed by Lavrenti P. Beria.

Other indications tending to show that Malenkov has been improving his position of power is the fact that since the death of Zhdanov the supporters of Zhdanov have been replaced by individuals who have been brought up in the party apparatus by Malenkov. These supporters of Zhdanov were three in number. Popov who headed the Party Organization has been deposed and he is one of the three who have been replaced by Malenkov's men.

Another indication of Malenkov's improved position was his recent accusations against the Jewish doctors who were purportedly attempting to assassinate members of the Army General Staff and [REDACTED] 25X1A5a1 seems to think that a split might develop between the Army and the Security Agencies of Beria because of their supposed inability to ferret out these "plotting doctors".

Although at the present time within the Kremlin walls a conflict may be developing over the assumption of leadership of the Soviet Union, [REDACTED] 25X1A5a1 seems to feel that a certain facade of unity will be maintained and that it may be quite some time before any individual has enough support to take over the Soviet governmental machinery.

Malenkov's position at the present time is similar to that which Stalin occupied prior to his assumption of supreme control in the Soviet Union after the death of Lenin and it is felt by [REDACTED] 25X1A5a1 that with Malenkov's control over the party apparatchiki and with his possible control within the Security Ministry his rise to absolute power may be facilitated. Malenkov's early training has been mostly within the political sphere rising from a political commissar in the Army to Secretary of the Party Organization in Moscow. He then went on to head the Cadre Section of the Central Committee and was a prominent leader during the 1939-41 period.

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At the 18th Party ^{Conference} Congress in 1941 Malenkov was elected a candidate member of the Politburo and during the war Malenkov was one of the five-man Council of Defense. During the postwar period he was made a full member of the Politburo and succeeded after the death of Zhdanov to become ideological spokesman for the party. In 1948 Malenkov became Party Secretary. This is the position which he holds up to the present time. Another indication which would tend to improve Malenkov's position was a purge last summer of the Georgian party organization that contained many supporters of Beria, since Beria himself was at one time Secretary of the Georgian Party.

Molotov's position seems to be weaker than that of either Beria or Malenkov since there is no knowledge of the power structure or organization within the Soviet Union that supports Molotov to the exclusion of the others.

Bulganin although maintained as a liaison member between the Central Committee and the Army seems also to lack any political following within the Soviet Union. Malenkov's main energies as can be seen have been spent in internal affairs of the Soviet Union and there are some indications that he is somewhat of an isolationist to the extent of wanting to build up internal Russia perhaps to the sacrifice of any external adventures. 25X1A5a1 commented that perhaps the satellite countries of Eastern Europe might have dissident anti-Malenkov groups within the various National Party structures but feels that with the purges of Eastern European Communist Parties that there is really no support for the theory that any of the satellite countries would stage any open revolt and it might also be noted that the purges in the Eastern European area are accredited to Malenkov. 25X1A5a1 further feels that since the 19th Party Congress in October 52 Stalin has helped to prepare the process of succession for Malenkov.

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